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ABSTRACT

This research brief uses the official measure of poverty and the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau to document poverty rates for children under age 18 in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The brief examines long-term trends in child poverty between 1979 and 1998 in each state. Further, the brief examines components of those trends, specifically during two distinct periods (1979-1993 and 1993-1998) that are defined by the national business cycle and by the overhaul of state and federal welfare laws. Findings indicate that the child poverty rate recovered from its 1993 peak of 22.5 percent to fall to 18.7 percent in 1998, still significantly higher than the 1979 level of 16.2 percent. There was wide variation among states in current child poverty rates and trends over the past 20 years. In 1998, six states plus the District of Columbia had child poverty rates that were significantly higher than the national average. Several states had increases in child poverty between 1979 and 1998 that exceeded the national average. Sixteen states reduced their child poverty levels over the same time period. States with high child poverty levels are no longer concentrated primarily in the South. Between 1979 and 1993, child poverty increased in all states except one. Child poverty rates declined in most states from 1993 through 1998. National welfare caseloads decreased by 47 percent from 1993 to 1998. In some states, child poverty rates improved substantially at the same time welfare rolls were reduced. Several other states cut welfare caseloads by more than half without any improvement in child poverty rates. (KB)

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ED 443 586

Childhood Poverty

RESEARCH BRIEF 2

Child Poverty in the States: Levels and Trends from 1979 to 1998

This research brief from the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) uses the official measure of poverty and the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau to document the levels of child poverty in all fifty states and the District of Columbia.[1] (In 1998, the official poverty threshold for a family of four was $16,660.) It also examines long term trends in child poverty between 1979 and 1998 in each state. Further, it looks at the components of those trends, specifically during two distinct periods (1979–1993 and 1993–1998) that are defined by the national business cycle and by major changes in policies affecting low income families, particularly the overhaul of state and federal welfare laws.

After years of economic growth, the U.S. child poverty rate recovered from its 1993 peak of 22.5 percent to fall to 18.7 percent in 1998, still significantly higher than its 1979 level of 16.2 percent. The number of children in poverty in the U.S. increased from 10.3 million in 1979 to 13.3 million in 1998. The U.S. child poverty rate continues to be unusually high from an international perspective.[2] After increasing by almost 40 percent from 1979 to 1993, the child poverty rate fell by one-sixth (17 percent) from 1993 to 1998. While the improvement in the poverty rate since 1993 is encouraging and important, it continues to lag well behind the decreases in the unemployment rate and the national welfare caseload. There is also wide variation among the states in their current child poverty rates and trends in those rates over the past two decades.

In contrast to the first research brief in this series, which focused on children under age six, this research brief

Figure 1: Levels of poverty for children under age 18, by state, 1998, and trends in poverty rates from 1979 to 1998

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States with child poverty rates significantly lower than the national rate [12]

States with child poverty rates similar to the national rate [32]

States with child poverty rates significantly higher than the national rate [7]

↑ States where child poverty rate increased significantly between 1979 and 1998 [14]

↓ States where child poverty rate decreased significantly between 1979 and 1998 [4]

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includes poverty rates among all children under age 18.[3] By casting the net wider to include all children, NCCP is able to get reliable state poverty estimates for a single year in time.[4] (Please note that poverty rates among children under age 18 are somewhat lower than those for children below age six.)

Child Poverty Levels in 1998

According to the official measure of poverty, 18.7 percent of U.S. children—13.3 million children—were poor in 1998. The national child poverty rate, however, masks considerable variation in poverty among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Twelve states had child poverty rates that were significantly lower than that for the nation as a whole. These states were quite literally all over the map, ranging from Alaska to Connecticut (Figure 1). Six states plus the District of Columbia had child poverty rates that were significantly higher than the national average. These states were Arizona, California, Louisiana, New Mexico, New York, and West Virginia.

States in close proximity to one another in some cases were subject to very different levels of poverty. New York State had a child poverty rate of 24 percent, in contrast to the rate of 12 percent in the adjacent states of Connecticut and New Jersey. Similarly, the child poverty rate in the District of Columbia, 45 percent, is more than five times as great as the 7 percent and 9 percent rates in the surrounding states of Maryland and Virginia, respectively.

Trends in Child Poverty, 1979–1998

To track child economic well-being over time, NCCP compares the child poverty rates and numbers of children in poverty for 1979 and 1998. Over that period, the U.S. child poverty rate grew from 16.2 percent to 18.7 percent (Table 1), an increase of 15 percent. The relatively small national increase does not reveal the much wider variation in state poverty levels that occurred from 1979 to 1998. In 14 states, the child poverty rate *increased* significantly and in 10 of those states it rose by more than half. But in a handful of states, the child poverty rate *decreased* by one-third or more.

States with Large Increases

In two states, the child poverty rate more than doubled from 1979 to 1998. Iowa's rate went from 7 percent to 15 percent and Arizona's rate rose from 13 percent to a fraction over 26 percent. In four additional states, the child poverty rate shot up by more than 70 percent: Wyoming (95 percent), Minnesota (85 percent), Oregon (73 percent), and Rhode Island (71 percent). Several other states also experienced increases in child poverty that far exceeded the national average of 15 percent. These included large states such as California (62 percent), Ohio (50 percent), Pennsylvania (49 percent), Michigan (37 percent), and New York (28 percent), as well as the District of Columbia (53 percent) and smaller states such as Idaho (49 percent) and West Virginia (43 percent).

The number of poor children in California increased by 1.25 million from 1979 to 1998, from 899,000 to 2,149,000—which accounted for over two-fifths of the national net increase of 3 million children in poverty from 10.3 million to 13.3 million during that period. One in six poor children in the U.S. now lives in California, compared to one in 11 two decades ago. The nine additional states that had increases in their number of poor children of over 100,000 since 1979 include: Texas (from 856,000 to 1,233,000), Arizona (from 103,000 to 361,000), New York (from 910,000 to 1,150,000), Ohio (from 361,000 to 525,000), Pennsylvania (from 374,000 to 526,000), Georgia (from 319,000 to 476,000), Michigan (from 316,000 to 443,000), Minnesota (from 93,000 to 215,000), and Oregon (from 87,000 to 188,000).

Several States Reduce Child Poverty

Some states were able to go against the national trend and significantly reduce their levels of child poverty by over 30 percent, including Illinois (32 percent), New Jersey (37 percent), South Dakota (39 percent), and Arkansas (41 percent). The number of children in poverty decreased in all of these states, led by Illinois (168,000 fewer children in poverty) and New Jersey (138,000 fewer children in poverty).

In several cases, neighboring states saw their child poverty rates surge in opposite directions. For instance, New Jersey's child poverty rate fell significantly, while New York and Pennsylvania's rose sharply. South Dakota lowered its child poverty rate by nearly 40 percent as Iowa and Minnesota suffered increases of more than 80 percent. One of the important challenges for future research will be to develop a better understanding of how some states have been able to achieve significant improvements in their child poverty rates as others have lagged behind.

Table 1: Change in the percentage and number of children under age 18 in poverty, by state, 1979 to 1998

	1979		1998		% Change in rate	Change in number
	Rate (%)	Number	Rate (%)	Number		
USA	***16.2***	***10,258,338***	***18.7***	***13,285,438***	***15.1***	***3,027,100***
Iowa	**7.3**	**57,661**	**15.4**	**112,621**	**111.5**	**54,960**
Arizona	**12.6**	**102,755**	**26.1**	**360,542**	**107.5**	**257,787**
Wyoming	**7.5**	**9,807**	**14.6**	**18,869**	**95.4**	**9,062**
Minnesota	**8.3**	**92,674**	**15.4**	**215,022**	**84.6**	**122,348**
Oregon	**12.5**	**86,867**	**21.6**	**188,134**	**72.9**	**101,267**
Rhode Island	**11.3**	**25,898**	**19.4**	**45,127**	**71.4**	**19,229**
Nevada	8.1	16,407	13.7	73,365	69.2	56,958
California	**14.4**	**899,444**	**23.3**	**2,148,779**	**61.7**	**1,249,335**
Wisconsin	8.7	115,046	13.5	173,285	55.2	58,240
New Hampshire	9.3	21,333	14.3	48,615	54.1	27,282
District of Columbia	**29.6**	**41,317**	**45.3**	**45,335**	**52.8**	**4,018**
Ohio	**11.9**	**360,787**	**17.9**	**524,984**	**50.4**	**164,196**
Pennsylvania	**12.0**	**373,904**	**18.0**	**525,804**	**49.4**	**151,900**
Idaho	**13.5**	**42,747**	**20.1**	**78,326**	**49.0**	**35,579**
North Dakota	14.4	27,411	20.6	37,524	43.5	10,113
West Virginia	**19.2**	**106,368**	**27.5**	**95,659**	**43.1**	**-10,709**
Colorado	9.8	75,213	13.4	133,693	36.9	58,480
Michigan	**11.3**	**316,316**	**15.4**	**443,059**	**36.6**	**126,743**
Utah	10.2	54,304	13.8	92,330	34.6	38,026
Delaware	12.1	20,106	16.1	34,264	32.7	14,158
Kentucky	14.3	148,966	18.6	175,656	29.9	26,690
Nebraska	12.6	54,324	16.2	81,291	28.5	26,967
New York	**18.9**	**909,786**	**24.2**	**1,150,446**	**28.2**	**240,660**
Oklahoma	15.1	119,645	19.3	155,453	27.4	35,808
North Carolina	16.7	301,962	21.3	385,095	27.1	83,133
Connecticut	9.2	70,874	11.7	96,285	26.5	25,411
Kansas	10.4	63,732	12.9	91,139	23.8	27,407
Louisiana	25.0	333,565	29.2	334,851	16.9	1,286
Georgia	19.9	319,445	23.3	476,198	16.7	156,753
Montana	19.0	42,330	22.0	57,699	16.1	15,369
Missouri	13.5	176,115	15.6	215,607	15.5	39,493
New Mexico	24.0	105,752	26.0	145,503	8.3	39,751
Texas	20.3	856,465	21.8	1,232,805	7.5	376,340
Hawaii	14.2	38,621	15.1	47,368	6.5	8,747
Massachusetts	13.7	209,592	13.8	203,526	1.1	-6,066
Indiana	12.5	207,552	12.0	180,873	-4.7	-26,679
Maine	15.1	44,269	14.0	43,511	-7.3	-758
Florida	24.2	604,828	21.9	700,322	-9.5	95,494
Vermont	15.1	23,778	13.5	19,746	-10.6	-4,033
Washington	12.7	155,304	11.1	166,060	-12.8	10,756
Maryland	7.9	88,107	6.9	80,127	-13.6	-7,980
Tennessee	21.5	273,200	18.1	261,675	-16.1	-11,526
Mississippi	27.3	200,115	21.6	164,810	-21.0	-35,306
Alabama	30.5	356,126	24.1	231,140	-21.2	-124,987
South Carolina	25.9	244,824	18.1	179,966	-30.2	-64,858
Illinois	**19.9**	**639,916**	**13.5**	**472,287**	**-32.4**	**-167,629**
Virginia	13.9	191,338	9.0	148,305	-35.2	-43,033
Alaska	15.7	20,711	10.1	20,900	-35.9	188
New Jersey	**18.9**	**378,782**	**12.0**	**240,911**	**-36.8**	**-137,871**
South Dakota	**19.4**	**42,249**	**11.7**	**22,204**	**-39.4**	**-20,045**
Arkansas	**27.4**	**189,697**	**16.3**	**108,341**	**-40.5**	**-81,356**

States in bold had significant changes in their child poverty rates between 1979 and 1998. Changes in other states are not considered statistically significant at a 90 percent confidence interval. For more information on child poverty, visit NCCP's website: ***www.nccp.org***

Table 2: Poverty rates for children under age 18, by state, 1979, 1993, and 1998, and percentage changes, 1979–1993 and 1993–1998

	Poverty rate (%)			% Change	
	1979	1993	1998	1979–1993	1993–1998
USA	**16.2**	**22.5**	**18.7**	**38.8**	**-17.1**
States with 1998 child poverty rates significantly lower than the national rate					
Alaska	15.7	11.3	10.1	-28.0	-11.0
Connecticut	9.2	16.7	11.7	**80.3**	-29.8
Illinois	19.9	20.4	13.5	2.6	**-34.1**
Indiana	12.5	16.5	12.0	31.5	-27.5
Kansas	10.4	18.2	12.9	**74.3**	-29.0
Maryland	7.9	13.2	6.9	66.0	-47.9
Massachusetts	13.7	17.1	13.8	25.3	-19.4
New Jersey	18.9	17.9	12.0	-5.3	**-33.3**
South Dakota	19.4	16.6	11.7	-14.1	-29.4
Utah	10.2	14.9	13.8	45.1	-7.2
Virginia	13.9	12.1	9.0	-12.9	-25.7
Washington	12.7	15.0	11.1	18.5	-26.4
States with 1998 child poverty rates similar to the national rate					
Alabama	30.5	22.2	24.1	**-27.3**	8.5
Arkansas	27.4	26.4	16.3	-3.9	**-38.1**
Colorado	9.8	12.9	13.4	32.1	3.6
Delaware	12.1	13.9	16.1	14.6	15.8
Florida	24.2	28.3	21.9	16.8	**-22.5**
Georgia	19.9	18.0	23.3	-9.8	29.4
Hawaii	14.2	13.0	15.1	-8.6	16.5
Idaho	13.5	18.0	20.1	33.9	11.3
Iowa	7.3	12.5	15.4	71.6	23.2
Kentucky	14.3	28.6	18.6	**99.3**	**-34.8**
Maine	15.1	20.5	14.0	35.9	-31.8
Michigan	11.3	24.9	15.4	**120.6**	**-38.1**
Minnesota	8.3	15.9	15.4	**90.4**	-3.1
Mississippi	27.3	33.9	21.6	24.1	**-36.4**
Missouri	13.5	21.2	15.6	**56.9**	-26.3
Montana	19.0	16.6	22.0	-12.5	32.8
Nebraska	12.6	14.1	16.2	12.1	14.6
Nevada	8.1	14.1	13.7	73.7	-2.6
New Hampshire	9.3	15.1	14.3	62.9	-5.4
North Carolina	16.7	19.5	21.3	16.4	9.2
North Dakota	14.4	13.5	20.6	-5.7	**52.2**
Ohio	11.9	19.7	17.9	**65.1**	-8.9
Oklahoma	15.1	26.0	19.3	**71.8**	-25.9
Oregon	12.5	17.2	21.6	38.2	25.1
Pennsylvania	12.0	20.0	18.0	**66.3**	-10.2
Rhode Island	11.3	21.4	19.4	**90.0**	-9.7
South Carolina	25.9	28.6	18.1	10.6	**-36.9**
Tennessee	21.5	29.6	18.1	37.7	**-39.0**
Texas	20.3	25.8	21.8	**27.2**	**-15.5**
Vermont	15.1	13.1	13.5	-13.2	3.0
Wisconsin	8.7	18.8	13.5	**115.6**	-28.0
Wyoming	7.5	14.7	14.6	**96.9**	-0.8
States with 1998 child poverty rates significantly higher than the national rate					
Arizona	12.6	24.9	26.1	**97.8**	4.9
California	14.4	27.4	23.3	**90.0**	**-14.9**
District of Columbia	29.6	50.0	45.3	**68.7**	-9.4
Louisiana	25.0	39.7	29.2	**58.8**	**-26.4**
New Mexico	24.0	21.2	26.0	-11.6	22.5
New York	18.9	26.1	24.2	**38.5**	-7.4
West Virginia	19.2	32.4	27.5	**68.7**	-15.1

Numbers in bold highlight poverty rates that changed significantly during the time period indicated. Changes in other states are not considered statistically significant at a 90 percent confidence interval. For more information on child poverty, visit NCCP's website: **www.nccp.org**

States with high levels of child poverty are no longer concentrated primarily in the South. In 1979, seven of the nine states with particularly high poverty rates were in the South. Today, only two of the six states with child poverty rates significantly higher than the national average are in the South (Louisiana and West Virginia). Southern states that no longer have child poverty rates significantly higher than the national average include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas.

1979–1993: Child Poverty on the Rise

Next, NCCP decomposes the changes in child poverty over this two-decade period into the general increase experienced by states over the two business cycles between 1979 and 1993 and the general decrease that took place in the economic recovery since 1993. Table 2 displays the changes in state poverty rates between 1979, a time of relative prosperity, and 1993, when the child poverty rate peaked. The child poverty rate for the nation as a whole increased by 39 percent, from 16.2 percent to 22.5 percent. Only one state—Alabama—achieved a significant reduction in child poverty—a decline of 27 percent, from 31 percent to 22 percent. In contrast, the District of Columbia and 18 states saw the economic well-being of low-income children significantly deteriorate over this time period. In almost all these states, the child poverty rate rose by over 50 percent, with the rate more than doubling in Michigan and Wisconsin.

1993–1998: A Dozen States Lead the Way

Table 2 also illustrates the percentage changes in child poverty rates that took place during the period of our burgeoning economy, 1993 through 1998. Although child poverty rates in most states declined, by no means have they all shared equally in the benefits of the economic recovery. Twelve states experienced significant improvements in child poverty over this brief time period. It is interesting to note that eight of 16 southern states had significant decreases in their child poverty rates compared to only four of 34 states outside the South. Five out of the six states with the largest percentage decreases in their child poverty rates were in the South (Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee). With the exception of California, the Western states were shut out of the reductions in child poverty that took place in the U.S. over the past five years. Two of the 12 states in the Midwest and only one of the nine states in the Northeast experienced significant declines in child poverty rates between 1993 and 1998.[5]

It is also interesting to compare state trends in welfare caseloads with state child poverty rates. Nationally, welfare caseloads decreased by 47 percent from 1993 through 1998.[6] During the same period the child poverty rate decreased by 17 percent. In some states, child poverty rates improved substantially at the same time that large numbers of families left the welfare rolls. In Illinois, New Jersey, and Tennessee, welfare caseloads declined by roughly half as child poverty rates also decreased substantially—by 33 to 39 percent. But several other states cut their welfare caseloads by more than half without any improvement in their child poverty rates. These states include North Dakota, Idaho, Georgia, Montana, Oregon, Alabama, Colorado, North Carolina, and Arizona. The relationship between families leaving welfare and families rising out of poverty is a subject that NCCP and other research organizations will need to study much more deeply to better inform the debate over reauthorization of the 1996 federal welfare legislation (The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act) in 2001.

Of the 18 states whose child poverty rates rose significantly between 1979 and 1993, only five subsequently experienced significant declines. California, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, and Texas recovered significantly in the 1993–1998 period.

Conclusion

Childhood Poverty Research Brief 2 documents the wide ranging levels and trends of poverty among children across the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Nationwide, according to the official measure of poverty, there are still over 13 million children in poverty in the U.S., despite the current sustained period of strong economic growth and low levels of unemployment. This research brief shows that child poverty rates have declined significantly since 1993. Nonetheless, the extent to which recent trends reflect structural improvements in the economy, changes due to welfare reform, or simply the nation's current position in the business cycle is unclear.[7] In the first research brief in this series, NCCP examined the extent to which changes in several variables, including family structure, parental education, parental employment, and immigration, affected changes in state young

child poverty rates. NCCP found that these factors provide an important but far from exhaustive explanation of state child poverty trends. Understanding what influences child poverty trends is important for several reasons. Developmental research shows that the healthy growth and development of children is negatively affected by poverty.[8] In addition to their direct human cost, these negative developmental effects also impose social and economic costs that ultimately affect all Americans.[9]

Finally, this research brief also demonstrates that child poverty is not an intractable problem. Several states have made remarkable progress in reducing their child poverty rates and the nation as a whole has recovered much of the ground that was lost from 1979 to 1993. In future reports, NCCP will continue to investigate the dynamics of child poverty and will also explore promising remedies that could be used to extend and accelerate the nation's recent progress in reducing child poverty. As part of this effort, NCCP will encourage the development and use of more policy-sensitive measures of poverty that will give a more thorough picture of the economic conditions facing America's low-income families.[10] In particular, NCCP will investigate in greater detail the effectiveness of state and federal policies that have the potential to help poor children, such as earned income tax credits and other initiatives to help poor families increase their incomes and reduce their work-related expenses.

Endnotes

1. The data in this research brief come from the March Current Population Surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. Each survey contains data collected from approximately 50,000 households across the nation. The poverty rate is defined as the proportion of individuals in families with incomes that fall below a poverty threshold for a given year. The threshold varies according to family size and is adjusted each year for increases in the cost of living.

2. Using Luxembourg Income Study data, a report by UNICEF on international child poverty rates ranks the U.S. second highest among industrialized nations using a relative poverty measure (i.e., 50 percent of the overall median income or child median income) but 12th highest using the official U.S. poverty line.

Bradbury, B. & Jantti, M. (1999). *Child poverty across industrialized nations* (Innocenti Occasional Papers, Economic and Social Policy Series No. 71). Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.

3. In *Young Child Poverty in the States—Wide Variation and Significant Change*, NCCP computed poverty rates that were based on five year averages so as to build samples of sufficient size to analyze poverty rates for children under age six on a state by state basis. The five year averages included the first, third, and fifth years of the five year period in order to avoid the problem of overlapping, and therefore correlated, samples.

4. When choosing to compute poverty rates for a single year in time, there is a tradeoff between the currency and stability of the estimates. Time trends in poverty will be less reliable among states with small populations (and therefore small sample sizes). In this report, NCCP looks at 50-state trends, but to focus on any one small state would require a pooling of data from several years. In future publications, NCCP will draw on data from several years to further analyze child poverty in the states.

5. The U.S. Census Bureau classifies the states and the District of Columbia into the following four regions. *Northeast*: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont. *Midwest*: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin. *South*: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia. *West*: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

6. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (1999). *Change in TANF caseloads*. Available at http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/caseload.htm.

7. Ellwood, D. T. (1999). *The plight of the working poor* (Children's Roundtable No. 2). Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

8. Aber, J. L.; Bennett, N. G.; Conley, D. C.; & Li, J. (1997). The effects of poverty on child health and development. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 18. Aber, J. L.; Jones, S.; & Cohen, J. (1999). The impact of poverty on the mental health and development of very young children, in C.H. Zeanah, Jr. (Ed.), *Handbook of infant mental health, 2nd ed.* New York, NY: Guilford Press; and Brooks-Gunn, J. & Duncan, G. J. (1997). The effects of poverty on children. *The Future of Children*, 7(2), pp. 55–71.

9. Sherman, A. (1995). *Wasting America's future*. Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.

10. Many policymakers and scholars believe that an alternative measure of poverty would render a more complete picture of the impact of government policies on family income. Such a measure would incorporate, for example, all types of income that the Census Bureau does, but in addition include "near-cash" benefits such as food stamps, housing subsidies, and school lunch benefits. Further, it would include the earned income tax credit—federal and, where appropriate, state—and subtract federal, state, and payroll taxes. The Census Bureau has released a series of "experimental measures," which, to varying degrees, correct for deficiencies in the current measure. To date, however, there is no consensus on exactly which components should be incorporated in this new measure. NCCP will examine alternative measures of poverty in future publications. When we measure poverty by means of an alternative measure that incorporates the types of income and subtracts the taxes mentioned above and, in addition, uses as a poverty threshold half of median family income, the trend over time is similar to that of the official poverty rate. (See also Burtless, G. & Smeeding, T. M. (2000). The level, trend, and composition of American poverty: national and international perspectives, presented at the conference: Understanding Poverty in America: Progress and Problems, May 22–24, University of Wisconsin Madison.) The notable exception to this similarity is that the alternative poverty rates decline at a faster pace since 1993 than the official rates, due to the significant expansion of the federal earned income tax credit.

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National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) was established in 1989 at the School of Public Health, Columbia University, with core support from the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The Center's mission is to identify and promote strategies that reduce the number of young children living in poverty in the United States and that improve the life chances of the millions of children under age six who are growing up poor.

Childhood Poverty Research Briefs

This research brief series presents timely research findings on the nature, scope, and impact of child poverty in the United States, primarily based on analyses by researchers at or affiliated with the National Center for Children in Poverty. The series explores the causes and consequences of child poverty and also identifies and critically examines promising strategies to reduce the incidence of child poverty. As with much of NCCP's work, there is a strong state and local focus.

Child Poverty in the States: Levels and Trends from 1979 to 1998

by Neil G. Bennett, Senior Advisor to NCCP for Demographic Research and Analysis and Professor of Public Affairs, School of Public Affairs, Baruch College–City University of New York, and Hsien Hen Lu, Assistant Professor of Public Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

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